UNITED STATES

NUCLEAR WASTE TECHNICAL REVIEW BOARD

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PANEL MEETING

Thursday, October 14, 2004

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- 1 There are seven people signed up to speak, and as in the
- 2 case of yesterday, I'd like to have the speakers address the
- 3 Board and the audience from the front podium and I'll also
- 4 invoke the no more than five minute rule, as well.
- We'll start off today with Bob Halstead and in the
- 6 on deck circle is Earl Easton.
- 7 HALSTEAD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity
- 8 to speak to you again. I'd like to address three issues;
- 9 routing, systems planning for hardware design, and the issue
- 10 of trust.
- 11 Issue #1, somehow yesterday we managed to make the
- 12 Western Governors Association and WIEB routing process
- 13 confusing and complex. I'm not sure why we weren't able to
- 14 make it simple. It seems to us it simply involves three
- 15 steps.
- The first step is for DOE to put forward base case
- 17 or straw men routes for each potential mode for each
- 18 shipping site to Yucca Mountain. That means the 77 sites,
- 19 72 commercial and five DOE. And, from Nevada's standpoint,
- 20 the representative routes that are in the Final EIS would be
- 21 a fine starting point for that, although many of you may be
- 22 surprised to find that they're hidden at the back of
- 23 Appendix J of the EIS and not put forward in an easily
- 24 accessible way, but they're actually there and that would be
- 25 a good starting point.

- Secondly, the states and DOE through Western
- 2 Interstate Energy Board with input from tribes and local
- 3 governments would evaluate those routes in comparison to
- 4 alternatives identified by states, tribes, local
- 5 governments, and process using the multi-attribute utility
- 6 process as Dr. Garrick suggested to rank order some of the
- 7 criteria, using certainly Dr. Abkowitz's all-hazards
- 8 approach, and frankly, we have the GIS tools to do this node
- 9 link analysis now very rapidly. And, we would also look at
- 10 minimizing impacts on urban areas with this proviso, it's
- 11 going to be very difficult to limit impacts on urban areas,
- 12 particularly for rail. And, we may have to think about
- 13 things like convoy requirements, time of day restrictions,
- 14 speed limits, special escort requirements. Special
- 15 administrative controls may be necessary to make certain
- 16 urban routes acceptable. And then, based on that analysis,
- 17 we would hope that the Western Interstate Energy Board could
- 18 specify preferred routes from a regional perspective.
- 19 The third step would be for the Department of
- 20 Energy to make a commitment and follow through on that
- 21 commitment to specify these routes in its motor carrier
- 22 contracts and its rail carrier contracts, understanding that
- 23 some provisions for temporary and emergency deviations would
- 24 have to be addressed. Not a perfect process, it reflects
- 25 our two decades of work in this field.

- The second issue, I'll try to be brief, but this
- 2 is a very important point. Dr. Arnold raised this point in
- 3 his questions to Mr. Parkyn and this came up in Earl
- 4 Easton's presentation yesterday. The bottom line is we are
- 5 seeing the absence of a systems planning approach to
- 6 hardware design, for storage, transport, and disposal. In
- 7 1990, the State of Nevada approached a standardized dual-
- 8 purpose cask, three sizes of dual-purpose cask using a
- 9 common design approach. In 1996, the State of Nevada
- 10 endorsed DOE's Multiple Purpose Canister approach. It seems
- 11 to have fallen by the wayside now, as Earl said, because the
- 12 utilities are focused on at-reactor storage and, frankly,
- 13 are interested in maximizing profit opportunities for
- 14 particular company who in some cases have organized
- 15 subsidiaries who provide the system designs for themselves
- 16 and they don't want them to be standardized.
- 17 That is causing a major problem for Yucca Mountain
- 18 which we talked about yesterday, but the issue we want to
- 19 talk about today is an issue that emerged yesterday when
- 20 Gary Lanthram and I were both being interviewed at the same
- 21 time by a reporter from the Deseret News and it occurred to
- 22 me this very simple thing had not been laid on the table.
- 23 And, that is that there is no hardware design exit strategy
- 24 for shipments from the PFS facility to Yucca Mountain. Now,
- 25 that has profound implications. It means that unless all

- 1 those standard contracts are renegotiated, that spent fuel
- 2 could end up having to be shipped back from PFS to the
- 3 originating reactors to be repackaged for shipment to Yucca
- 4 Mountain. It's further complicated, of course, by the
- 5 absence of useful waste acceptance criteria and final waste
- 6 emplacement package designs because of the uncertainties
- 7 about thermal loading at Yucca Mountain.
- 8 I believe that this is an area that the Board
- 9 should highlight. And, in my personal opinion, it's
- 10 probably the single most important thing that the Board
- 11 could redirect DOE's program regarding and that is that we
- 12 need to have an integrated systems approach to designing
- 13 this hardware. We can still do this now. Of the 100,000 to
- 14 120,000 metric tons of projected spent fuel from the
- 15 existing reactors, assuming 20 year license extensions, less
- 16 than 20 percent of that spent fuel has been committed to a
- 17 specific dry storage design. Yes, it will be expensive to
- 18 switch for the 20, but for the 80 percent that's yet to be
- 19 committed or generated, we can standardize this system.
- 20 It's not too late to do this. And, the longer we wait, of
- 21 course, the more difficult and more expensive it becomes.
- 22 Finally -- and, I'm sorry, I'm going over, Mr.
- 23 Chairman--let me just briefly address a third issue and that
- 24 is the absence of trust, generally speaking, in government
- 25 organizations, of my own agency included. But,

- 1 specifically, the lack of trust in the Atomic Energy
- 2 Commission and the Department of Energy based on the weapons
- 3 testing program in Nevada. And, this, combined with the
- 4 lessons I learned working on the Crystalline Repository
- 5 Project when I worked for the state of Wisconsin between
- 6 1978 and 1988, there is a profound problem with the public
- 7 perception of this agency and its history. I'm not saying
- 8 it's fair. I'm just saying it's a real problem. In 1985, a
- 9 major program milestone was made in the so-called Waste
- 10 Commingling Report where the decision was made to give DOE
- 11 full jurisdiction over both the civilian waste and the
- 12 defense waste. I think that's an issue that the Board will
- 13 have to be sensitive to. That, in addition to other
- 14 institutional issues, there is a profound distrust of the
- 15 Department of Energy, whether it's deserved or not in the
- 16 State of Nevada and in many other states.
- 17 Thank you again for having this meeting in a
- 18 western location and thank you again for allowing me to
- 19 speak.
- 20 ABKOWITZ: Thank you, Bob.
- Our next commenter will be Earl Easton and he will
- 22 be followed by Marjorie Bullcreek.
- 23 EASTON: Thank you. Earl Easton, U.S. Nuclear
- 24 Regulatory Commission. I'd like to make three comments; two
- 25 as a representative of the NRC and one a personal